



Contact:
Jenny Kopach
(630) 792-1251 office
(630) 215-8490 cell
jrkopach@soinc.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

Science Olympiad Students from Ohio Invited to White House Science Fair in Washington, DC

Oakbrook Terrace, IL — Two outstanding Science Olympiad competitors from Solon Middle School in Solon, Ohio, will attend the 6th Annual White House Science Fair hosted by President Barack Obama, an event highlighting the achievements of students from major national science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competitions, on Wednesday, April 13, 2016. This is the seventh time Science Olympiad has been lauded by a sitting president; in March of 1992, President George H.W. Bush and Education Secretary Lamar Alexander hosted 180 Science Olympiad dignitaries and students at a Washington, DC ceremony; in October 2010, February 2012, April 2013, May 2014 and March 2015, Science Olympiad students and coaches attended President Obama's annual White House Science Fairs.

Science Olympiad is a Chicago-area based, national non-profit organization founded in 1984 dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 STEM education, increasing male, female and minority interest in science, creating a technologically literate workforce and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by both students and teachers. More than 220,000 students and 35,000 teachers on 7,500 teams from all 50 states competed in 400 regional, state and national Science Olympiad tournaments last year. A signature program started in 2007, the Science Olympiad Urban Schools Initiative, provides schools with minority enrollment the additional training and resources needed for students and teachers to succeed in Science Olympiad's hands-on STEM competitions.

"For the past 32 years, Science Olympiad has allowed students to discover their passion and apply their skills in a team setting," said Dr. Gerard Putz, president and co-founder of Science Olympiad. "With hands-on STEM events that cover biology, chemistry, engineering, astronomy, epidemiology and robotics, Science Olympiad is building the science and technology workforce of the future."

Background

Students at the White House event were both on the Solon Middle School Science Olympiad team, which took top honors against 59 other Division B middle schools at the 31st Annual 2015 Science Olympiad National Tournament. Emily Rabinovich placed in the top six in the nation in Water Quality, Disease Detectives and Write It Do It. As a team co-captain, she said, "Science Olympiad provided me with an outlet to learn to my heart's content and reminded me that there is a place for girls just like me in STEM." Sydney Bolomey, who placed nationally in the top six in the events Can't Judge A Powder and Air Trajectory, learned that being a team captain "meant doing everything you could to help the team, to show leadership and set an example." Even though she was not a builder, she took on the Air Trajectory event and "the screech of the circular saw, the bang of hammer on nails, and the satisfying whirr of the band saw became commonplace." She and her partner won 5th place in the US in the event. Team coach Nevin Voll carried on Solon's winning tradition, capturing its seventh Science Olympiad National Tournament title in 2015 after Beckendorff JHS broke Solon's streak of six consecutive wins from 2008-2013.

"Our Solon Middle School students thrive in Science Olympiad because they can apply their knowledge and interest in science to real-world problems while developing higher-order thinking skills," said Principal Scott Hatteberg. "Their diligent work has produced innovative ideas, driving them to make a difference in the world. We could not be prouder to have champions Emily and Sydney represent Science Olympiad and Solon Middle School at the White House Science Fair today."

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